THE

Last Speech and Carriage,

OF THE

LORD *RUSSEL*, upon the Scaffold, &c.

On *Saturday* the 21st. of *July*, 1683.

ABout Nine in the Morning, the Sheriffs went to *Newgate*, to see if my Lord *Russel* was ready, and in a little time his Lordship came out, and went into his Coach taking his Farewel of his Lady, the Lord [illegible] and several other of his Friends at *Newgate*; in the Coach were Dr. *Tillotson*, and Dr. *Burnet*, who accompanied him to the Scaffold built in *Lincolns-Inn-fields*, which was covered all over with Mourning. Being come upon the Scaffold, his Lordship bowed to the Persons present, and turning to the Sheriff made this following Speech.

Mr. SHERIFF,

I *Expected the Noise would be such, that I should not be very well heard. I was never fond of much speaking, much less now, therefore I have set down in this Paper all that I think fit to leave behind me. God knows how far I was always from designing against the King's Person, or of altering the Government. And I still pray for the preservation of both, and of the* Protestant Religion.

Mr. Sheriff, I am told, that Capt. Walcot *Yesterday said some things concerning my knowledge of the Plot. I know not whether the Report is true or not.*

Mr. Sheriff, I did not hear him name your Lordship [illegible] by any of them.

Writer. No, My Lord, your Lordship was not named by any of them.

Lord *Russ.* *I hope it is not, for to my knowledge I never [illegible] with him in my whole Life; and in the words of a Dying Man, I profess I know of no Plot, either against the King's Life or the Government. But I have now done with this World and am going to a better, I forgive all the World heartily, and I thank God I die in Charity with all Men, and I wish all sincere* Protestants *may love one another, and not make way for Popery by their Animosities. I pray God forgive them, and continue the* Protestant Religion *among them, that it may flourish so long as the Sun and Moon indures. I am now more satisfied to die than ever I have been.*

Then kneeling down, his Lordship prayed to himself, after which Dr. *Tillotson* kneeled down and prayed with him, which being done his Lordship kneeled down and prayed a [illegible] time to himself, then pulled off his Wigg, put on his Cap, took off his Coat, and Cloak, and bidding the Executioner, after he had lain down a small moment, do his Office without a Sign, he gave him some Gold, then embracing Dr. *Tillotson*, and Dr. *Burnet*, he laid him down with his Neck upon the Block.

The Executioner missing at his first stroke, though with that he took away Life, at two more severed the Head from the Body: The Executioner held up the Head to the People, as is usual, in Cases of Treason, &c. Which being done Mr. *Sheriff* ordered his Lordships Friends or Servants to take the Body, and dispose of it as they pleased, being given them by his Majesties Favour and Bounty.

The Paper delivered to the Sheriffs by My L^d. Russel.

I Thank God, I find my self so composed and prepared for Death, and my Thoughts so fixed on another World, that I hope in God, I am now quite weaned from setting my Heart on this. Yet I cannot forbear spending some time now, in setting down in Writing a fuller Account of my Condition, to be left behind me, than I'll venture to lay at the Place of Execution, in the Noise and Clutter that is like to be there. I bless God heartily for those many Blessings, which he of his infinite Mercy has bestowed upon me, through the whole Course of my Life: That I was born of worthy good Parents, and had the Advantages of a Religious Education; which I have often thank'd God very heartily for, and look'd upon as an invaluable Blessing. For even when I minded it least, it still hung about me, and gave me Checks, and hath now for many Years so influenced and polished me, that I feel the happy Effects of it in this my Extremity, in which I have been so wonderfully (I thank God) supported, that neither my Imprisonment, nor the Fear of Death, have been able to discompose me to any degree; but on the contrary, I have found the Assurances of the Love

and Mercy of God, in and through my blessed Redeemer, in whom only I trust; and I do not question, but that I am going to partake of that Fulness of Joy which is in his presence, the hopes whereof does so wonderfully delight me, that I reckon this as the happiest time of my Life, though others may look upon it as the saddest.

I have lived, and now die of the Religion of the Church of England, though I could never, yet comply with, or rise up to all the heights of some People, to which with all my Soul, all our unhappy Differences were removed, and that all sincere Protestants would so far consider the Danger of Popery, as to lay aside their Heat, and agree against the Common Enemy; and that the Church-men would be less severe, and the Dissenters less scrupulous: For I think Bitterness and Persecution are at all times bad, but much more now.

For Popery, I look on it as an Idolatrous and Bloody Religion; and therefore thought my self bound, in my Station, to do all I could against it. And by that, I foresaw I should procure such great Enemies to my self, and so powerful Ones, that I have been now for some time expecting the worst. And blessed be God, I fall by the Axe, and not by the Fiery Tryal. Yet, whatever Apprehensions I had of Popery, and of my own severe and heavy share I was like to have under it, when it should prevail, I never had a Thought of doing any thing against it basely, or inhumanly; but what could well consist with the Christian Religion, and the Laws and Liberties of this Kingdom. And I thank God, I have examined all my Actings in that Matter, with so great Care, that I can appeal to God Almighty, who knows my Heart, that I went on Sincerely, without being moved, either by Passion, By-End, or ill Design. I have always loved my Country much more than my Life; and never had any Design of changing the Government, which I value, and look upon as one of the best Governments in the World, and would always have been ready to venture my Life for the preserving of it, and would have suffered any Extremity, rather than have consented to any Design to take away the King's Life: Neither ever had Man the Impudence to propose so base and barbarous a thing to me. And I look upon it as a very unhappy, and uneasy part of my present Condition, That in my Indictment there should be so much as mention of so vile a Fact, though nothing in the least was said to prove any such Matter; but the contrary, by the Lord *Howard*: Neither does any Body, I am confident, believe the least of it. So that I need not, I think, say more.

For the King, I do sincerely pray for him, and wish well to him, and to the Nation, That they may be happy in one another; that he may be indeed the Defender of the Faith; That the Protestant Religion, and the Peace, and Safety of the Kingdom may be preserved, and flourish under his Government; and that He in his Person may be happy, both here, and hereafter.

As for the share I had in the Prosecution of the Popish Plot, I take God to Witness, that I proceeded in it in the Sincerity of my Heart; being then really convinced (as I am still) that there was a Conspiracy against the King, the Nation, and the Protestant Religion: And I likewise profess, that I never knew any thing, either directly or indirectly, of any Practice with the Witnesses, which I look upon as so horrid a thing, that I could never have endured it. For, I thank God, Falshood and Cruelty were never in my Nature, but always the farthest from it imaginable. I did believe, and do still, that Popery is breaking in upon the Nations, and that those who advance it, will stop at nothing, to carry on their Design: I am heartily sorry that so many Protestants give their helping Hand to it. But I hope God will preserve the Protestant Religion, and this Nation: though I am afraid we will fall under very great Tryals, and very sharp Sufferings. And indeed the Impiety, and Profaneness that abounds, and appears so scandalously bare-faced every where, gives us too much reason to fear the worst things which can befal a People. I pray God prevent it, and give those who have shew'd Concern for the Publick Good, and who have appear'd Hearty for the true Interest of the Nation, and the Protestant Religion, Grace to live so, that they may not cast a Reproach on that which they endeavour to advance; which (God knows) I have often given me many sad Thoughts. And I hope such of my Friends as may think I have been touch'd by this, will not take what I say in ill part, but endeavour to amend their ways, and live suitable to the Rules of the true Reformed Religion; which is the only thing can administer true Comfort at the latter End, and revive a Man when he comes to Dye.

As for my present Condition, I bless God, I have no Repining in my Heart at it. I know for my Sins I have deserved much worse at the Hands of God; so that I chearfully submit to so small a Punishment, as the being taken off a few Years sooner, and the being made a Spectacle to the World. I do freely forgive all the World, particularly those concerned

cerned in taking away my Life. And I desire and conjure my Friends to think of no Revenge, but to submit to the holy Will of God, into whose Hands I commend my Soul freely.

But to look back a little; I cannot but give some touch about the Bill of Exclusion, and shew the Reasons of my appearing in that Business; which in short is this. That I thought the Nation was in such danger of Popery, and that the Expectation of a *Popish Successor* (as I have told in Parliament) put the King's Life likewise in such danger, that I saw no way so effectual to secure both, as such a Bill. As to the Limitations which were proposed, if they were sincerely offered, and had pass'd into a Law, the Duke then would have been excluded from the Power of a King, and the Government quite altered, and little more than the Name of a King left. So I could not see either Sin or Fault in the case, when all People were willing to admit of either; but thought it better to have a King with his Prerogative, and the Nation easy and safe under him, than a King without it, which must have bred perpetual Jealousies, and a continual Struggle. All this I say, only to justify my self, and not to inflame others. Though I cannot but think my Earnestness in that matter has had no small Influence in my present Sufferings. But I have now done with this World, and am going to a Kingdom that cannot be moved.

And to the conspiring to seize the Guards, which is the Crime for which I am condemned, and which was made a *constructive Treason* for taking away the King's Life, to bring it within the Statute of *Edw.* the 3d. I shall give the true and clear account. I never was at Mr. *Shepheard's* with that company but once, and there was no undertaking then of securing, or seizing the Guards; nor none appointed to view, or examine them: Some Discourse there was about the Feasibleness of it; and several times by accident, in general Discourse elsewhere, I have heard it mention'd, as a thing might easily be done, but never consented to as fit to be done. And I remember particularly as my Lord *Shaftsbury's*, there being some general Discourse of this kind, I immediately flew out, and exclaim'd against it, and ask'd, If the thing succeeded, what must be done next but massacring the Guards, and killing them in cold Blood? Which I look'd upon as undetestable a thing, and so like a Popish Practice, that I could not but abhor it. And at the same time the Duke of *Monmouth* took me by the Hand, and told me very kindly, My Lord, I see you and I are of a Temper; Did you ever hear so horrid a thing? And I must needs do him that Justice to declare, that I never observed in him but an Abhorrence to all base things.

As to my going to Mr. *Shepheard's*, I went with an Intention to eat *Sherry*; for he had promised me to reserve for me the next very good Piece he met with, when I went out of Town; and if he recollects, he may remember I ask'd him about it, and he went and fetch'd a Bottle; but when I tasted it, I said, it was hot in the Mouth, and desired that whenever he met with a choice Piece, he would keep it for me. Which he promised. I enlarge the more upon this, because Sir *Geo. Jeffreys* insinuated to the Jury, as if I had made a Story about going thither; but I never said, that was the only Reason. And I will now truly, and plainly add the rest.

I was the day before this Meeting, come to Town, for two or three days, as I had done once or twice before; having a very near and dear Relation lying in a very languishing and desperate Condition: And the Duke of *Monmouth* came to me, and told me, He was extreamly glad I was come to Town; for my Lord *Shaftsbury* and some hot Men would undo us all, if great Care be not taken, and therefore, for God's sake use your Endeavours with your Friends to prevent any thing of this kind. He told me, there would be Company at Mr. *Shepheard's* that Night, and desired me to be at home in the Evening, and he would call me; which he did. And when I came into the Room, I saw Mr. *Rumsey* by the Chimny; though he swears he came in after; and there were things said by some with much more Heat, than Judgment, which I did sufficiently disapprove, and yet for these things I stand condemned. But I thank God, my part was sincere, and well meant. It is, I know, inferred from hence, and was prest to me, that I was acquainted with their Heats and ill Designs, and did not discover them. But this is but Misprision of Treason at most. So I dye innocent of the Crime I stand condemn'd for, and I hope nobody will imagine that so mean a Thought could enter into me, as to go about to save my self, by accusing others. The part that some have acted lately of that kind, has not been such as to invite me to love Life at such a rate.

As for the Sentence of Death passed upon me, I cannot but think it a very hard one. For nothing was sworn against me (whether true or false, I will not now examine) but some Discourses about making some Stirs. And this is not levying War against the King, which is Treason by the Statute of *Edward* the Third, and not the consulting and discoursing about

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ch, which was all that was witnessed against me. But by a strange Fetch, the Design of seizing the Guards, was construed a Design of killing the King; and so I was to that call.

And now I have truly and sincerely told what my part was in that, which cannot be more than a base Misprision; and yet I am condemned as guilty of a design of killing the King. I pray God lay not this to the charge, neither of the King's Counsel, nor Judges, nor Sheriffs, nor Jury: And for the Witnesses, I pity them, and with them well, I shall not reckon up the Particulars wherein they did me wrong; I had rather their own Consciences should do that, to which, and the Mercies of God, I leave them. Only I still avers, that what I said of my not hearing Col. *Rumsey* deliver his Message from my Lord *Shaftesbury*, was true; for I always detested Lying, tho never so much to my advantage. And I hope none will be so unjust and uncharitable, as to think I would venture on it in these my last Words, for which I am so soon to give an account to the Great God, the Searcher of Hearts, and Judg of all Things.

From the Time of chusing Sheriffs, I concluded the Heat in that Matter would produce something of this kind; and I am not much surprized to find it fall upon me. And I wish what is done to me, may put a stop and satiate some Peoples Revenge, and that no more Innocent Blood may be shed; for I must and do still look upon mine as such, since I know I was guilty of no Treason; and therefore I would not betray my Innocence by Flight, of which I do not (I thank God) yet repent, (tho much pressed to it) how fatal soever it may have seem'd to have proved to me; for I look upon my Death in this manner, (I thank God) with other eyes than the World does. I know I said but little at the Trial, and I suppose it looks more like Innocence than Guilt. I was also advis'd not to confess matter of Fact plainly, since that might possibly have brought me within the Guilt of Misprision. And being thus restrained from declaring frankly and openly, I chose rather to say little, than to depart from Ingenuity, that by the assistance of God I had carried along with me in the former parts of my Life, and so could rather be silent, and leave the whole matter to the Conscience of the Jury, than to make the last and solemnest part of my life so different from the course of it, as the using little Tricks and Evasions must have been. Nor did I ever pretend to a great readiness in speaking: I wish those Gentlemen of the Law who have it, would make more Conscience in the use of it, and not run Men down by Strains and Fetches, impose on easie and willing Juries, and the Ruine of innocent Men: For to kill by Forms and Subtilties of Law, is the worst sort of Murder. But I wish the Rage of hot Men, and the Particulars of Parties may be stopp'd with my Blood, which I would offer up with so much the more Joy, if I thought I should be the last were to suffer in such a way.

Since my Sentence, I have had few Thoughts, but Preparatory ones for Death: Yet the importunity of my Friends, and particularly of the best and dearest Wife in the World, prevailed with me to sign Petitions, and make Addresses for my Life: To which I was very averse. For (I thank God) tho in all respects I have lived one of the happiest and contented'st men in the world, (for now near fourteen years) yet I am so willing to leave all, that it was not without Difficulty, that I did any thing for the saving of my Life, that was Begging. But I was willing to let my Friends see what Power they had over me, and that I was not obstinate, nor sullen, but would do any thing that an honest Man could do for their Satisfaction. Which was the only Motive that sway'd, or had any weight with me.

And now to sum up all, as I never had any Design against the King's Life, or the Life of any man whatsoever; so I never was in any Contrivance of altering the Government. What the Heats, Wickednesses, Passions, and Vanities of other men have occasioned, I ought not to be answerable for; nor could I separate them, tho I now suffer for them. But the Will of the Lord be done, into whose Hands I commend my Spirit; and trust that thro' O most merciful Father, but forgiven me all my Transgressions, the Sins of my Youth and all the Errors of my past Life, and that thou wilt not lay my secret Sins to my Charge; but wilt graciously support me during that small part of my Life now before me, and settle me in my last Moments, and not leave me then to be disorder'd by Fear, or any other Temptation; but make the Light of thy Countenance to shine upon me; for thou art the Sun and my Shield; and as thou supportest me by thy Grace, so I hope thou wilt hereafter crown me with Glory, and receive me into the Fellowship of Angels and Saints in that blessed Inheritance purchased for me by my most merciful Redeemer, who is, I trust, at thy Right Hand, preparing a Place for me; into whose Hands I commend my Spirit.

Signed *Will. Russel.*

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